

Mystery Guest Worship Card

Date of Visit: 2/26/12

Church Name: *Mt. Carmel, 9:30 service*

Pastor's Name: *Cyndi McDonald*

Visitor's Worship Style Preference: *Either Trad or Contemp*

WEB PRESENCE

Active, clear, accurate, updated?

I have been following Mt. Carmel for a few months. In that time, they have updated their website. I love it! It is very easy to navigate, interesting and inviting. Well done!

PHONE PRESENCE

I called several months ago and spoke to very nice lady. Not only did she have a very pleasant demeanor, she offered more information than I asked for. I was excited to visit Mt. Carmel just from my interaction with her.

DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

Street and Building Signs?

There is one street sign from Old Peachtree Road. It was obstructed by a banner. Maybe move the banner back some??

There was a sign on the Hope House and Church Office building. Other than that, I didn't see any signs. I was confused where to enter the Sanctuary.

EXTERIOR ISSUES

Parking Lot? Grounds?

The Parking lot and grounds were very neat and well groomed.

Sidewalks? *No issues.*

Landscaping? *.well maintained and neat*

Entrance Walk up? *Not well marked. Small sign in the landscaping that I almost missed. I would suggest putting potted plants, etc, by the Sanctuary doors as well as signs on the doors.*

Overall Rating: (1-needs much work; 10-good shape)

8 – in good shape, the Sanctuary entrance just needs to be built up some.

BUILDING INTERIOR:

Entry? Narthex?

Narthex is almost non-existent. You barely have room to walk in before you have to open another door to the Sanctuary.

Inside Signage? *Nice inside signage.*

Halls and Walls? *Very neat church!*

Bathroom? *Easy to find and clean.*

Nursery *Didn't see the nursery but wouldn't imagine there to be a problem.*

Sanctuary? *Nice, older Sanctuary.*

Overall Rating:

9

(Could the two inner doors be taken down? It was awkward to walk in then have to maneuver to open them. May give a little more feeling of a Narthex.)

HUMAN INTERACTIONS:

Greeted? *Yes!*

Inquired of? *Yes! A lady named Marlene Porter immediately recognized that I was a visitor and offered to show me where to go. She was very pleasant and even offered for me to sit with her. She was inviting without being overbearing. I enjoyed her company and those in row 5!*

Ushers? *He wasn't standing at the door, but quickly came to our aid to give us bulletins.*

Age Aura of Congregation? *All ages.*

Congregation Demeanor? *Very welcoming and inviting.*

Food/Coffee? *Did not see any.*

Overall Rating: *10+*

Worship for First Time Visitors

Beginning Time: *9:30*

Exact Opening Words: *Good morning, I welcome you in Grace and Peace. (paraphrasing. Because I was sitting with Marlene, I wasn't able to write down notes) I wish Rev. McDonald as well as the music leader had introduced themselves.*

How do you feel 10 minutes into service? *Welcomed and comfortable.*

Energy level of service: *Medium*

Rev. McDonald was standing up front near the pews and then began welcoming everyone. I wasn't sure if it was the start of the service or not. She was on the floor and so many people (including the children) were still coming in the Sanctuary. They came in front of her and because she is so mild mannered, a visitor may miss it's the start of the service. Could she move to the center and closer to the altar rail? That way if people walk in front of her, at least it would be obvious she was the pastor.

Focus is centered on: *each other and visitors. Focus was also on the beginning of Lent.*

Congregation is sensitive to: *visitors*

Moments of Visitor Confusion: *outside when entering the Sanctuary only. Then Marlene took over.*

Moments of 'very cool': *Meeting Marlene and the sermon by Cyndi McDonald. AND the mandolin!*

Rev. McDonald has a very pleasant delivery and her sermon was so well thought out and endearing. She had a suitcase packed with items she thought she needed on her

Lenten Journey. We discovered, though, how unnecessary so many of those items are. It was a great way to start my own Lenten Journey!

Also, at the end of the service, the entire congregation stood around the perimeter of the sanctuary holding hands. We shared celebrations and concerns there. This has the potential of being off putting but was not. I can't say enough how caring these people were to me and to each other. I even received two follow ups via email

Ending Time: 10:34

Response to 'Standing & Lost': *na*

Overall Rating: 8 – *energy level.*

AFTERGLOW REFLECTIONS:

Overall feeling of worship service

This is such a charming church and congregation. Marlene is the one I connected to, but there were certainly others that would have stepped up if I hadn't met her. The service was easy to follow and not at all intimidating for a first time visitor.

Overall feeling of total visit *The congregation as a whole is very welcoming. People cared that I was there.*

Most memorable takeaway *The people and the sermon*
Strengths *People and sermon*

Things to consider: *Even though this is a laid back service, I do feel there needs to be organization in order to appeal to visitors.*

I would also 'spruce' up the entry way to the Sanctuary. Make the entrance more intentional.

RANDOM NOTES:

I have been trying for several months to get to Mt. Carmel's 9:30 service. Sometimes my schedule changed but twice I tried to come and it fell on the 5th Sunday. The church has one service those weeks. I think it is hard to have consistency and hard for a visitor if the service times change. It's great for the congregation to see one another, but that has a very inward focus.

If they are going to continue the 5th Sunday, I would give it a name and market it more intentionally than it appears they do. It is barely mentioned on the website. Give it a name and its own page! As it is now, it has one line on the Worship page and you could miss it unless you are looking for it. Make sure visitors aren't surprised and know what to expect.

The announcement time ran a little long. Rev. McDonald went over everything in the bulletin as well as handouts. A quick mention of those items may have been more useful.

Overall, this is a great church. My visit to Mt. Carmel was one of the most pleasant I've had! If I lived closer, I'd come back again!